

Industrial Socialisation and Role Performance in Contemporary Organization

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Abstract

This article is an analysis of the concept, Industrial Socialization. The paper presented core component or elements of the object of Industrial Socialisation in terms of constituent of cognitive orientation to be gained in industrial socialization process which include: History of organization, culture, ecology, goals and objectives, career path, output, changes etc. The authors assumed that industrial socialization determines role performance of employee. Consequently, present industrial socialization role performance matrix which indicates that managerial staff requires 70% and above cognitive orientation developed through socialization process to invoke high affective and evaluative orientation in order to produce natural motivation that enhances high and efficient role performance, while supervisory/technical staff requires 60% and clerical/artisan 50%. The paper recommended the replacement of training and retraining in industrial sociology literature with industrial socialization and resocialisation. The paper also recommends allocation of adequate resources for strategic development of employee socialization strategy in every modern organization as well as utilization of industrial sociologists as experts in designing, implementing, evaluating industrial socialization strategy in organization to enhance efficient and effective role performance by employees to boost organizational productivity, adjustment to change, as well as growth and development.

Keywords: Industrial socialization, role performance, organization strategy, employees, efficiency and effectiveness.

Introduction

Modern study of industrial sociology focuses on application of traditional sociological concepts in analyzing dynamics in contemporary organizations. This marks a departure from the traditional approach of centering on industrial relation concepts, themes and issues, which makes it difficult to distinguish industrial sociology from industrial relations. It is on this premise that this paper is designed to examine the effect of industrial socialization on employees' role performance.

Socialization is an important concept in the field of sociology. It focuses on how people internalize norms, values and general way of life in society in order to function effectively as members of society. Socialization involved learning. Some scholars refer to industrial socialization as organizational socialization, just as industrial sociology is also considered as the "Sociology of Organization". Scheim (1990) defines organizational socialization as "the process of teaching the new recruit how to get along in the organization, what the key norms and rules of conduct are, and how to behave with respect to others in the organization, which is often termed – learning the ropes".

Employee can not perform their role effectively without socialization taking place, which presents them with idea of the roles expected of them.

Industry refers to a branch of economic activity that is devoted to the production of a particular good or service (Hobson and Sullivan, 2002). Industrial organization includes all formal organization involved in the production of goods and provision of services. Whether an organization is public or private, as much as it consists of groups of people interacting in work relationship in order to produce goods or provide services, such constitutes industrial organization. In this sense, industrial organization does not only refer to hi-technology production companies or firms. Contemporary organizations are often complex in pattern and structure. The complexity include multiplicity of work groups, organized on professional or occupational basis, as well as multiplicity of statuses and associated roles that must be performed by occupants of statuses. The extent to which these roles are effectively and efficiently performed is the primary concern of this paper. The paper is designed to examine to what extent socialization process within the industrial organization influence role performance by employees of all categories within the organization.

Conceptual Analysis

The concept of “industrial socialization” is the independent variable while “role performance” is the dependent variable. This paper attempts to analyze the relationship existing between these two variables and impact exerted by their interplay on the organization. In order to achieve this purpose, the two concepts have to be subjected to in-depth analysis.

Industrial Socialization

Industrial socialization is the process through which new employees and other entrants into modern organizations are trained in order to increase their knowledge about the organization, its norms, rules and other internal dynamics in order to enable them function effectively as employees, members and stakeholders. Industrial socialization is a social learning process within a formal group, such as public bureaucracy, state enterprises, private companies, non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, transnational corporation and international agencies/organizations.

Core Component

There are basic things employees and other stakeholders need to know about the organizations they join to make a career. Such include: history and development of the organization, organization culture, the environment of the organization including its internal and external stakeholders and public, growth and development objectives, mission and vision, career structure and path, product, service, structure of interaction, communication and market coverage. All these form cognitive domain provided through socialization process. It is this cognitive domain that will help the new entrant build both affective and evaluative domain which will influence role performance, in terms of status he or she is to be inducted into in the organization.

Every organization has its history, which includes: when the organization was established, objective for which it was established, major events, programmes and activities as they occur and dynamics that motivates their occurrence. The history also involves stages in the evolution of the organization, such as major changes, their causes and consequences. Basse (2012) posited that every organization experiences changes from time to time. Change in organization entail transition from a current state to a new state or condition, which may be desired or undesired. It is desired when such change is strategically planned and designed by management. Change may appear in terms of management structure, operation, location, business climate, regulatory policy, service and product line, career path, manpower composition, compensation pattern, objective and internal dynamics. History of organization presents sequences of changes that occurs in the organization as well as causes and consequences of such changes. Employee should acquaint his or herself with this information in order to prepare for future change challenges, prepare to accept change and adjust to changes for the sustenance of the organization rather than resistance.

Organizational culture has to do with values, norms and patterns of action that characterize social relationships within a formal organization (Scott and Marshall, 2005). How things are done, the routine tradition and conduct peculiar or unique to the organization can be explained from the standpoint of organization culture.

Since culture involves non-material and material component, the same is applicable to the organization. The behavioural and normative elements of organization's life are the non-material, while the products of the organization consist of the material aspect of the organizational culture. A new entrant into the organization has to learn the culture of the organization. Every aspect of organization's life could be explained from the perspective of organization culture. Thus, every member of the organization should be acquainted with cultural dynamics within the organization in order to function effectively therein. Rules guiding behavior in the organization and laws are integral components of its culture.

The concepts of organizational climate and environment are closely related. Generally, climate condition is only one aspect of physical environment. The organizational environment consists of both physical and social elements. The physical and social aspects of organizational environment are equally important. The physical environment consists of climate, vegetation, topography and edaphic characteristics of the locality from where an organization is sited or operating in. The social environment includes: political, economic, legal, cultural dynamics prevailing outside the boundary of the organization which influence and is being influenced by the organization. Every employee and stakeholder should be adequately acquainted with these dynamics, as the activities, operations, services and products of any organization are shaped by these elements. The social environment also include stakeholders who constitute internal and external public of such organization.

Miller and Dess (1966) defines corporate vision as "category of intentions that are broad, all-inclusive, and forward thinking" and Kazmi (2002) considered vision as future aspirations of organization that lead to an inspiration to be the best in one's field of activity. Mission according to hunger and Wheelen (1999) is the purpose or reason for the organization's existence. Objectives are the ends that state specifically how the goals shall be achieved, while goal denotes what organization hopes to accomplish at a future period of time (Kazmi, 2002). Every employee must have adequate knowledge of the vision, mission, goal and objectives of the organization he is part of, because having such orientation will enhance employee's ability to synchronize his or her personal goals and objectives with that of the organization he is working in. Whenever there exists congruency between the employee's goal and that of the organization, such employee will be naturally motivated to perform his roles in the organization.

Career path and structure do significantly motivate or de-motivate employees. A well defined career structure will relax and prepare individual for role performance. Employee should be exposed to the career path and structure as applicable in the organization immediately, on appointment. Career path should be well designed, because career success which is tied to a well-designed career structure is an element of efficient role performance by employee and general productivity of organization.

Another aspect of an organization that requires employees and stakeholder to have adequate cognitive orientation are product, service and market coverage. An employee should be able to tell outsiders the products produced by his employer or services provided. The same is expected of organization's market for product and services. For instance, insurance agent must be able to present both the company and its products to prospective clients. The agent should also be able to indentify exiting and potential market for employer's products or services. This is applicable to employees of different organizations both in the service industry, manufacturing concerns and public service. Learning and knowing the service, product and market will boost key competence of employee and it is acquired through socialization whether formal or informal within industrial organizations.

Stages of Industrial Socialization

Industrial socialization takes place throughout the career of an employee in any organization, just as socialization generally is a lifelong sociological process. As employees move from one status to another in the workplace, additional learning is required to perform roles associated with new statuses/roles. Socialization takes place at the following stages: pre-employment stage, post-employment stage, status passage stage, pre-retirement stage and consultation stage.

Pre-employment stage: This stage represents the stage at which applicants obtain specific information about organizations which they desire to join in future, or in which they apply for jobs. Children may learn about organizations in which their parents, relatives and that in which their peers relatives are working through interaction with current employees with whom they relate in one way or another.

Information and knowledge gained may help them in service if employed in such organization in future. People may specifically learn about organizations as they prepare for job interviews and aptitude test of such organizations. What they learn will help them in developing affective and evaluative orientation that is likely to influence their future job commitment.

Post-employment stage: This stage of socialization involved initial learning about organization immediately after employment to be able to function effectively as a new member. The pre-employment stage prepares grounds for post-employment socialization process. Actual organization membership commences before post-employment socialization. It is post-employment socialization with its direct link from organization membership that socialization in the sociological sense commences. It may be formal in which formal induction programme is instituted and various issues and topics regarding the organization are introduced to the new employees as detailed in the area of core-competence. The process may be informal in which people learn informally through interaction and association with others within work groups in performance of job tasks. Employees are also enlightened about job process, methods and techniques during post-employment socialization process.

Status Passage Stage: This stage is very basic to this paper, as it deals with performing specific job roles. Status passage stage is the stage employee learn to perform specific role related to specific new status they move into in the course of their career within an organization. For instance, movement by promotion from supervisor to manager requires learning the roles of manager in order to function effectively and efficiently as a manager in the organization. Career refers to the sequence of events within a person's work history (Hobson and Sullivan, 2002). Every status passage constitutes an event and for each status passage the employee learns and internalize roles and associated behaviour expected by the status. In this case, industrial socialization unlike general socialization which is lifelong process, is a career-span process.

Pre-Retirement Stage: This stage occurs immediately before the employee separates from the organization through retirement. Duration and actual timing varies from organization to organization. It is not earlier than 3 years before actual retirement date or later than 6 months before same date. The employee at this point learns about life outside the organization, challenges ahead, opportunities, alternatives means of livelihood to enhance adjustment, post service adaptation and re-integration.

Consultative Stage: This stage exists for those that are not necessarily career employees. They are ad-hoc personnel, contractors, indigenes of catchment areas of organization and other stakeholders who may have one dealing or another with the organization and requires information which they have to learn and internalize to assist or facilitate their deals which may be short-term or long-term. Customers and clients, distributors, and patients of hospitals need to know for instance clinics and consultation periods, fees and other charges.

Agencies of Industrial Socialization

Agencies of industrial socialization refers to settings that facilitate employees learning of organizational norms and work behaviour in order to function effectively in the organization and be able to make a career through which he contributes towards efficiency and development of the enterprise. The agencies are both formal and informal which produces primary and secondary socialization respectively.

Primary Agency: In the primary agency, socialization is informal. The learning is through association and interaction with others. All the pre-employment stage of industrial socialization, knowledge acquired about work and organization is mostly informal through relatives and peers.

Secondary Agency: At secondary agencies, socialization is relatively formal and structured. The organization itself may conduct direct trainings, workshops, conferences at the organization in which employees directly and formally learn about their work and the organization to aid their functioning and role performance. Employees may also learn at external workshops, conferences and training programmes through organization or self sponsorship. Another very important agency of secondary socialization at work place is those presented by industrial groups like trade unions, professional associations and labour movements. For instance, line and staff professional association provides learning opportunities for their members in tertiary hospitals such as Nigeria Medical Association (line) for doctors, and National Association of Nurses and Midwives (staff) for nurses (Bassey, Ojua, Archibong and Bassey, 2012). All these efforts at training and learning are directed to ensuring optimal role performance by employee of various categories.

Where a church or other religious organizations exists as employees of labour, they provide channels for socialization of such employees to help them perform their roles effectively and efficiently for the success of the organization. For example, church seminaries provide socialization for Pastors, priests and other lay functionaries, in order for them to understand their roles and perform them effectively and efficiently. Secondary agency of industrial socialization involves all organs or units of organization which formally designed and systematically implement learning programmes and events for employees to enhance their role performance for the overall productivity benefit of the organization.

Pre-Conditions for Industrial Socialisation

For socialization to take place, certain conditions should be in place. If these conditions are not available, socialization may not take place. The first is that there must be an organization which is ongoing. Industrial socialization can not take place without an ongoing industrial organization, just like sociological socialization cannot take place without an ongoing society. Secondly, the employee or potential employee must have adequate requisite biological inheritance to be able to learn and socialize with work and work environment. Finally, the employee must have human nature and present humane disposition. These will help in rating his or her affective and evaluative orientation towards his work and the organization.

Counter-Socialization and Resocialization in Work Place

Counter-socialization refers to learning experiences which are contrary to previous experiences that may totally or radically change an employee's personality. Take for instance, on employment a new employee learns that over-invoicing is unethical and a crime, but after status passage to management position he discovers that over-bloated manpower position will increase annual subvention to the organization which is contrary to ethical practice. Management of organizations should try and ensure continuity of socialization rather than counter-socialisations as it is produced by contrary practices by management, negates efficiency in role performance and must be prevented as much as possible. Resocialization on the other hand refers to "relearning of norms and rules by employees who left the organization on their return to the system. Such movement out and in may be voluntary or involuntary. For instance, an employee terminated and later re-absorbed (involuntary), or resigned and re-employed [voluntary]. Re-socialization may also apply in case of employees who left for long-term training and development programmes, through either the organization or self-sponsored. The essence of re-socialization is to regain full acceptance and re-embrace oneself with practice in the system in order to foster reintegration.

Role Performance in Industrial Organization

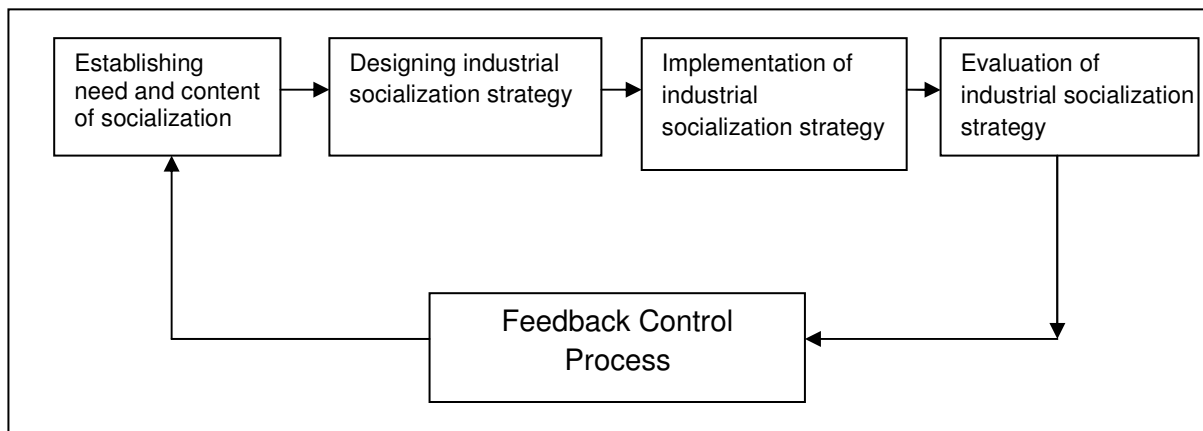
Social Role specifically has to do with behaviour associated with a particular social status (positions). It is considered by Ottong (2011) as the dynamic expression of social status. Role performance is actually how the occupant of social position carry out functions and behave or conduct the position. Every organization consists of statuses and roles, and employees require adequate socialization in order to perform the utmost expectation of management. When more is expected of an occupant of organizational status (manager) than his ability permits him, there exists industrial role discrepancy. Role conflict will exist when there is incompatibility among roles corresponding to two or more statuses in the work place. For instance Manager (employee welfare) has to ensure staff care and need satisfaction. Where the same Manager is a chairman of staff disciplinary committee, there is industrial role conflict. Merton (1968) postulated "insulating role" as a remedy to role discrepancy and conflict, by compartmentalizing role in their specific setting when one performs more than one role associated with many statuses he is occupying rather than discarding them. This process of 'insulating role' can not adequately resolve role conflict to produce efficiency without adequate socialization.

Industrial socialization provides the antidote for associated role performance problems such as role discrepancy, conflict and strain. Adequate socialization will provide employees and management of industrial organizations with conflict management techniques and strategies with which to resolve all types of conflict in performing their role for the growth, development and overall progress of the industrial organization. No member of industrial group can function well without adequate socialization process. Industry should ensure that employees are in shape for socialization as it is the only solution for role performance problems.

Application

Every industrial organization must design and implement industrial socialization strategy. Just like there are production, operation, planning and development strategy. Industrial socialization should be a strategic concern of management of any organization. Chandler (1962) defined strategy as: “The determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adaptation of the courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals”. Industrial socialization strategy should be put in place by all organizations whether service or production. It should exist over all level of organization as employee progress in career from corporate level, distinct business unit and functional level. Every goal of the organization and objectives should be covered in core element of industrial socialization, as well as courses of action to achieve goals and objectives must be made known to employee through socialization process at all levels of the enterprise. For industrial socialization to be effective, adequate resources should be allocated for staff learning processes.

Diagram I Industrial socialization strategy model



Authors' construct (2012)

There are five major processes in applying industrial socialization strategy to boost role performance in any organization as in diagram I. Establishing Need and Content of Socialization is the first stage in industrial socialization strategy. The need is concerned with fundamental necessity of learning to acquire useful information. Learning is essential to any member of organization. Major question is what to learn which is revealed in the content as presented earlier under core-competent elements. The second stage involved Designing Industrial Socialization Strategy in terms of goal, objectives, methods, techniques, and tools. It may be through direct or indirect learning. Direct in the form of orientation programmes, training workshop, conferences etc. Indirect may occur in form of inter-group learning through employee associations and unions. Implementation entails ensuring that adequate structure and personnel are in place. For instance, financial allocation through budget should be adequately provided for implementation. Experts should be sourced to implement especially those that are involved in design. These experts should be professionals with higher qualifications in industrial sociology and psychology. Evaluation is directed at comparing the outcome of implementation with goals and objectives in order to see if the content at implementation adequately satisfy the established needs. The findings of the evaluation process will be re-channeled into the system for reformulation and redesign of new strategy to satisfy any observed inadequacy especially where counter-socialization was noted or role performance problems identified.

The success of industrial socialization strategy in terms of producing effective and efficient role performance rests on the core content of socialization, which should be indicated in industrial socialization role performance matrix to serve as a guide in any organization industrial socialization strategy.

Table 2: Industrial Socialisation Role Performance Matrix

Core Content	History of enterprise	Organization culture	Ecology of organization	Goals and objectives	Career path and structure	Organization structure	Output
Managerial	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%
Supervisory/ technicians	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
Clerical/ artisans	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%

Authors' construct, 2012

Any managerial staff in an organization whose cognitive orientation of basic core elements after industrial organization evaluation process with less than 70% will not fit into performance of managerial role perfectly. Thus, should not be assigned managerial function. At supervisory and technician level, 60% cognitive orientation is required, while for clerical, artisans and other junior cadre of employee, 50% is required. The development of affective orientation is dependent upon excellent cognitive orientation rate which commences from 70%, for managerial staff, 60% for supervisor and 50% for clerical. Once cognitive orientation is high, it will induce high affective and evaluative orientation, employees will be naturally motivated towards high commitment in role performance.

Awareness created through socialization will help prevent unethical behaviours which will cause loss to the organization. Employees' high affective and evaluative orientation will help prevent corruption, truancy and boost work commitment. Staff will have job satisfaction, and bring more effort to work. Highly socialized employee is an asset to the organization, as such personnel will work with innovation, creativity and ingenuity. All these positive variables created through industrial socialization will boost productivity of any organization.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Though industrial organizations today focuses on training and retraining of employees, emphasis should be directed towards ensuring that the training process produce adequate socialization content in order to facilitate employee efficient and effective role performance. Training and retraining are useful in re-orienting staff for a particular job task. But where the employee role performance is required to improve and be sustained as the employee progress in career ladder, training, retraining and development of staff should be socialization driven.

This paper specifically emphasizes the replacement of training and re-training with industrial socialization and resocialization in the field of industrial sociology or sociology and organization of work, while the latter should be the domain of education field (Basse, Basse, Ojua, and Ottong, 2011). It is recommended that management of modern industrial organization should invest resources on employees socialization by developing industrial socialization strategy as one of the strategic concerns of management.

This concept is developed in its pure form and it is expected that further research will be carried out by the researchers in terms of determining its empirical application for business growth and development. Other researchers are also encouraged to examine the applicability of the concept of Industrial Socialization and its matrix in determining industrial role performance in diverse business environments and organizational complexity.

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